

MEDITATIONS

A N D

L E T T E R S

WROTE BY THE LATE

WILLIAM ALEXANDER,

K
During his Confinement in *Newgate*;

Who was convicted of FORGERY, at the last Assizes
at *Newcastle*, and executed the 17th Nov. 1783:

Published from his own MANUSCRIPTS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

HIS LAST DYING

S P E E C H,

Some ACCOUNT of his BEHAVIOUR, &c.

N E W C A S T L E :

Printed by T. SAINT, and sold at his Office, in Pilgrim-
street; and by the Booksellers in Town and Country.

[PRICE FOUR-PENCE.]

MEMORANDUM



re
be
hi
co
fir
R
br
m
w
w
ch
at
fo
13
on
th
bi
re
fe
fo
tin
Lo
ca
wh
bi
ap
do
co
be
ce
dic

SHORT ACCOUNT

W M ALEXANDER.

MUCH has been said of the unfortunate person, of some of whose papers the following is a copy; but as these reports not only, in many instances, contradict themselves, but some of them are absolutely contradicted by himself in his last words, when one cannot but suppose truth would come from his lips, we rather chuse to suppress them. He first came to this town in April last under the name of George Ross, Surgeon of his Majesty's ship the Resolution, and brought with him a letter of recommendation from a tradesman in Glasgow to a correspondent in this town, which afterwards appeared to be forged. With the credit, the connection with that Gentleman gave him, he negociated a bill of exchange, at the Tyne Bank, which appeared to be drawn at New York, the 17th of January, 1783, by Samuel Jenkinson, upon Messrs Gray and Ogilvie, Agents, in London, for 135l. 12s. payable at fifty days sight to James Ferguson, Esq; or order, the name J. Ferguson being indorsed upon it, with the acceptance of Gray and Ogilvie at the bottom. For this bill he received a Scotch Note on London for 100l. and the remainder in cash. The bill being sent to London, and presented to Messrs Gray and Ogilvie, they discovered the forgery, and of consequence refused payment. In the mean time he had gone to Liverpool, and got, for this 100l. bill on London, another smaller bill on London, and the remainder in cash. He then went to London with a Captain in the Navy, who, they both having lodgings at Peckham, took this small bill of his to be exchanged, and by that means he was apprehended, by the name of George Ross, and was sent down hither by a Writ of Habeas Corpus, to take the course of the law. The bill and indorsement were supposed to be forged, as well as the acceptance, but he was only proceeded against for the latter; and at our last assizes, was indicted by the names of William Alexander, otherwise George Ross,

Ross, otherwise George Christie, names he at different times had assumed, for forging the said Gray and Ogilvie's acceptance of the said Bill of Exchange, and for uttering the same, with intent to defraud the said Gray and Ogilvie, and also the Proprietors of the Tyne Bank. Upon his trial, a witness from London proved, that the acceptance upon the said Bill was not the hand writing either of Gray or Ogilvie, or any of their Clerks; his uttering the Bill with that acceptance at the Tyne Bank as true, and there obtaining value for it, and other circumstances, were also clearly proved, and the jury found him guilty. He behaved well during his trial, and received his sentence with calmness, and a seeming resignation and acquiescence.

One of the jury, who tried him, not having been returned on the Sheriff's pannel, though summoned instead of his father, a respite was given till the 17th of November, that such an informality might have the consideration of the twelve judges; and happy it was so! for he spent the intermediate time in the most penitent and becoming manner. He was ever averse from giving any account of himself, of his family, or even of his proper name, 'till the 15th, when at one of the humane and charitable visits of the Sheriff, he begged him to send to the Printer of these sheets, the paper, signed W. Alexander, which he meant, and did read, word for word, to the populace immediately before his execution. At about one o'clock he set off from Newgate in a mourning coach, attended by the Rev. Mr Brown, one of the Ordinaries, and a Dissenting Minister. He had taken the sacrament from Mr Brown at two in the morning, had afterwards a sound sleep for three hours, spent the time previous to, and after he had left the gaol, in prayer, &c. and after reading his speech, copied in the following pages, was turned off, with an astonishing serenity pictured on his countenance, at a quarter past two, and expired without a pang.

During his confinement, he was very fervent in his devotions, desirous of being instructed in his duty, and constantly read the scriptures, and other religious books; or wrote upon serious and instructive subjects. He was fully convinced of the evil consequences of vice and irregularity; was truly penitent; met his fate with perfect resignation, and wonderful fortitude; and left a convincing proof, that a proper knowledge and practice of the duties, required of us by the gospel, will enable us to bear the severest trials with becoming cheerfulness and submission.

MEDITATIONS, &c.

P R A Y E R I.

O Father of mercies! comfort my soul in trouble, and purify it with thy grace, that it may be a clean and holy habitation, such as thy glorious Majesty does not disdain to dwell in. Let no impurity be suffered to remain in me, but purge me thoroughly from every thing that may offend thee. Look upon me in thy great goodness, and, after the multitude of thy tender mercies, hear the prayer of thy poor sinful creature. O keep my soul, and deliver me; lead me safe through this vale of danger and sorrow, and conduct me by the way of peace and holiness, to thy heavenly kingdom. Go not far from me, O Lord my God—make haste to help me; for corrupt imaginations are constantly rising in my breast, and innumerable fears and sorrows close my soul in on every side. The sense of my hazardous condition overwhelms me with torment, and deep distress; while I see the greatness of my danger, and the multitude of my sins.—Shoot forth, O blessed Jesus, the bright beams of thy heavenly and eternal light, that they may enlighten all the dark corners of my soul, and effectually scatter every cloud of ignorance and error, which now hang so thick over me. Thou, O Lord, who commandest the waves and the winds, and they obey thee, silence

A

the

the storms within my troubled breast. Send out, O Father of all goodness, thy light and thy truth upon me. Raise and refine my mind from all earthly things, and draw my affections up to heaven. Unite me to thyself, for thou alone canst answer all my wants. O most merciful God, purge my soul from all vain anxiety, and banish all idle fears; enable me to get over the distracting troubles of the world. Give me grace to consider myself, and all things below, as full of vanity. Impart to me, then, O my God, I humbly beseech thee, that heavenly wisdom, which may dispose me to seek thy kingdom, and thy righteousness. I cannot flee from the scourge of thy wrath; but, O merciful Redeemer, enable me to fly to thee, thou Saviour of the world, who shedst thy precious blood for the salvation of guilty sinners, of whom I am the chief. Turn not away from me, when I call upon thee, in this my time of great distress; for my relief can alone come from thy redeeming love. Grant me then, O blessed Lord, a rescue in thy own good time, and in the mean time strengthen me with patience; that thy powerful aid may enable me to bear up against the sharpest tribulations, without despondency or distraction. My sinful heart acknowledges thy mercy in the midst of wrath, and sadly reflects that thou hast punished me, much less than my offences deserve: O that this humble sense of my own guilt may work in me such quiet and contented submission to thy divine Providence, that I may neither unduly decline, nor unthankfully murmur at the weight of my sufferings, till, in thy infinite mercy, thou seekest fit to grant me comforts of thy favour in that heavenly kingdom, where all tears shall be wiped away—then shall I triumph in death. But O most merciful Creator, how can I look up to thee for forgiveness:—Thou whom I have so often and grievously offended; Thou who canst not look on sin, but with the utmost detestation and abhorrence;—thou who even charged the angels with folly.—Lord these reflections of thy divine attributes make me almost despair

despair of pardon : But when I think on thy almighty goodness, in sending thy only begotten Son, who was with thee from all eternity, to this sinful world, to shed his immaculate blood for guilty sinners; O God suffer and help me to lay hold on that divine sacrifice. O blessed Jesus, who pardoned the thief on the cross, may I find the efficacy of thy all sufficiency in the agonies of death, that I am about to suffer; and that, after having rendered myself obnoxious to human society, I may, by a sincere repentance, find admittance into thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits of thy atoning love.

O Lord, out of thy all bountiful goodness, bless all whom I have injured, whether in their property or otherwise: O God, shower down a double portion of good things upon them, make their situation in this life comfortable, and take them to thyself at last.— Bless the whole race of mankind: may all live to serve thee, the only true God—these things I ask through the merits of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R II.

O God of all mercy and consolation, to whom can I lift up my eyes but unto thee; for, while I lie before thee, in this infinite distress, I know that thine almighty power and boundless grace can still find out a way for my recovery. Thou art he whom I have most of all injured and affronted, and yet from thee alone must I seek redress; against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, so that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest, though thou should'st this moment adjudge me to eternal misery. And yet, O goodness! beyond thought and power divine, I feel something that secretly draws me to thee, as if I might find rescue there, where I have deserved the most aggravated destruction. O thou God! of infinite mercy and

goodness, I know I have destroyed myself, but in thee is my help, if there be help at all. Have mercy, therefore, upon me, O God! according to thy loving kindness. O point out the city of refuge! O lead me thyself in the way everlasting! I know thy gospel is the only remedy; O teach thy servants to administer it! And O prepare mine heart to receive it! I know it is the great design of the gospel, wherever it is cordially received, to fill the heart with sentiments of love to thee the summit of all happiness. Arise, O my dejected soul! prostrate in the dust before God, and, trembling under the terrors of his righteous sentence, receive the glad tidings of the glorious gospel, published to the world by thy only begotten Son. O may the gracious tidings of salvation, purchased by the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer, give me that consolation which the world cannot take from me. O blessed be his holy name, who fore-seeing the apostacy into which the whole human race would fall, did not determine to deal with strict, *though just*, severity against us, so as to consign us over to everlasting ruin; but published to all, to whom the gospel might reach, the express offers of life and glory, in a manner which his infinite wisdom judged most suitable. O goodness infinite, enable me to look up to my redeemer; let me view him in his sufferings, when he cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me. He was wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities; the chastisement of my peace was upon him, that by his stripes I might be healed and accepted of thee as righteous. O my soul, what return can I make for such super-abundant goodness; poor dust and ashes, alas! thou hast nothing to offer! Nevertheless I may rejoice in the assurance, that where sin hath abounded, there shall grace much more abound. O how astonishing the thought, that thou shouldst leave the magnificence and joy of the heavenly world, in compassion to such a wretch as I am: Thus thou hast atoned injured justice, and redeemed me with thine own blood.

blood. O let me not receive this grace of God in vain; but raise me to that humble gratitude, to that active unwearied zeal in thy service, which becomes one in my humble situation. Oh let not this, which I would fain call my christian-joy, be as that foolish laughter with which I have been so madly enchanted; but teach me to secure this mighty blessing, this glorious hope, in the method which thou hast appointed, and prevent me from mistaking the joy of nature, for that grace which embraces and ensures deliverance.

Lord, I am convinced of my guilt and condemnation, and of my own inability to recover myself; nevertheless let me feel that conviction more deeply, and impress it yet stronger upon my soul, that I have undone myself. O God, enable me to apply to Christ with a deep abhorrence of my sins, and a firm resolution in the strength of his grace, for my acceptance with thee. O thou blessed Redeemer, I have wronged thee most ungratefully, but now I am willing to submit to thee; and I have brought my soul to be lodged in thine hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it. O Lord, I have no treasure wherewith to purchase it, I have no equivalent to give thee for it; but if that compassionate heart of thine can find a pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayest here find. I admit thee, O my Saviour! and welcome thee with unutterable joy; but, O Lord! conquer every licentious principle within me; that it may be my joy to be wisely governed and restrained from all evil; especially subdue my pride, that so ill suits an impoverished and condemned creature, that thy way of salvation may be amiable to me, in proportion to the degree in which it is humbling. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me do, that I may practise it: If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength, that I may be enabled to address myself to thee, with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that at length sees, and knows, there is salvation in no other. I adore thy goodness

(6)
and patience, that has borne with me so long, and the grace that now makes me willing to be thine. Oh! secure this treacherous heart to thyself. Oh! unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of flesh and blood, none of the vanities of an ensnaring world, may draw me back from thee, till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, the fullness of thy goodness. These things I ask through the merits of my ever blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R III.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy loving kindness, and pardon my offences, for they are without number, and very heinous in their nature: They have stained my soul deeply, till it is odious in thy sight, wherefore, O merciful God, wash me thoroughly in the blood of Jesus, and cleanse me by thy holy spirit. Shew me thy mighty power and mercy, by pardoning all my transgressions. I am inwardly depraved in my understanding, and corrupted in my will. Enlighten my mind, and dispel all the errors and mistakes, and teach me what thy holy spirit can teach, that the blessed fruits may appear in a sincere and thorough change in my soul, that I may be holy even as thou art holy. O most gracious God, give me but hope that thou wilt forgive me all my sins, and O give a portion of thy divine spirit, that I may be enabled to perform, and seek after, that real repentance which can alone be acceptable to thee.

Purify me, I beseech thee, from those evil affections that so often intice me from thinking on thee, and free me from those dangerous errors, which have led me astray from thee.—Let me go on in a holy course, by the continuing aid of thy grace, though I have defiled myself, and rendered myself obnoxious to thy immaculate holiness; yet, O God, cast me not off for ever,
but

but renew in me a right, true, and unfeigned disposition of mind, which will dispose me to proper views of my own state, and of thy greatness. Let me see the absolute necessity of applying to Jesus Christ, whose all-sufficiency alone can make me acceptable to thee. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R. IV.

BLESSED Jesus, I present myself unto thee as a wretched creature, driven indeed by necessity to do it, for surely were not that necessity urgent and absolute, I should not dare for shame to appear in thine holy and majestic presence. I am fully convinced that my sins and my follies have been inexcusably great, more than I can express; such aggravations have attended my transgressions, that it looks like presumption so much as to ask pardon of them; and yet would it not be greater presumption to say, that they exceed thy mercy, and the efficacy of thy blood! to say that thou hast power and grace enough to pardon sinners of a lower order, while such as I lye out of thy reach! Preserve me from that blasphemous imagination! Thou art indeed able and willing to save to the uttermost.—Thou knowest, O Lord, all my sins and follies; I cannot, and I hope I would not, disguise them before thee, or attempt to find out any plausible excuses. Many have met with pardon, even beyond their hopes, and, as thy compassion is inexhaustible, I will throw myself at thy feet, earnestly beseeching thee, that thou wilt have mercy upon me. Oh! do not resolve to send me down to a state of final misery and despair, which it was thy gracious purpose to save me from.—Oh! remember that my eternity is at stake. Remember, O Lord, that all my hopes of obtaining eternal happiness, and avoiding everlasting destruction, depend intirely upon thee—They hang upon thy smiles, or drop at thy frown.—Speak Lord by thy blessed spirit, and banish my fears—Look unto me with love and grace in thy countenance, and say to me, thy sins are forgiven thee :

thee ; go in peace—O Lord enable me to commit my immortal soul to thee, that thou may'st purify and save it, that thou may'st govern it by the dictates of thy word, and the influences of thy holy spirit : and that thou wilt receive it at death, and fix it among those spirits, who with perpetual songs of praise surround thy throne.—Come therefore, O thou blessed spirit, who art the author of all grace and consolation, work this temper in my soul, and represent sin to me in all its most odious colours, that I may feel a mortal, and irreconcilable hatred to it.—Oh ! represent the majesty and mercy of the blessed God, in such a manner, that my heart may be alarmed at its awful condition ; convince me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—Teach me by faith to behold thee as extended on the cross, with open arms, and with a bleeding side, telling me in the most forcible language, what room there is for me.—In thy power and love may I confide—To thee may I without reserve commit my spirit—Thy image may I bear, thy laws may I observe, thy service may I pursue, and may I remain thro' time and eternity a monument of the efficacy of thy Gospel, and of thy victorious grace.—Blot out, I beseech thee, O God, every false and presumptuous hope—Let me know the worst of my case, be that knowledge ever so distressful, and tho' there be remaining danger, Oh ! let my heart be fully sensible of it.—O God, if there be any secret sin yet lurking in my soul, which I have not sincerely renounced, discover it to me, and send it out of my heart, and accomplish in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness—and manifest thy gracious presence in my soul, till it is ripened for that state of glory, which thou hast promised the righteous. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R V.

Blessed God, thou art the fountain of all happiness, and as from thee my being was derived, so from thee happiness directly flows. With thee is the fountain of life ; the great object of my final hope is to dwell

dwell for ever with thee; give me, I beseech thee,
 some foretaste of that delight; give me to experience
 the blessedness of that man who seareth the Lord.—
 To thee may my waking thoughts be directed, and
 with the first ray of light, that visits mine opening eyes,
 lift, O Lord, the light of thy countenance upon me;
 when my faculties are roused from that state, as it were
 annihilated in sleep, may my first actions be consecra-
 ted to thee, O God, who gavest me light; who gavest
 me every morning a new life.—Enable me to pour
 out my heart before thee with a filial reverence, free-
 dom, and endearment. O may I listen to the dictates
 of thy word, and may my soul be animated by the
 great motives there suggested. May I every morning
 be renewing the dedication of myself to thee, through
 Jesus Christ thy beloved son, and be deriving from
 him new supplies of his blessed spirit; and, being
 thus prepared, do thou, O Lord, lead me forth by
 the hand to all the duties of the day. May I know,
 O God, that my time is in thine hands; for, though I am
 dead to this world, yet, O merciful Creator! with
 thee there is life everlasting through the merits of my
 Redeemer. May I know the value of time, and im-
 prove it in such duties as will be most suitable to one
 in my situation, how painful soever they may be.—
 To thy glory, O Lord, may my whole attention be
 fixed; may every refreshment animate me to serve
 thee with greater vigour and resolution. May mine
 heart be thankful, and mine eye watchful to observe all
 thy mercies, and with gratitude to look up to that
 hand who gave them; and, when afflictions come, O
 God, enable me to bear them with fortitude and re-
 signation, knowing, that if I come off conqueror, I
 shall receive the greater reward.—When I am sur-
 rounded with temptations, do thou, O Lord, deliver
 me; make me sensible, I entreat thee, of my own
 weakness, that my heart may be raised to thee for
 present communications of proportionable strength.—
 When I am engaged in the society of others, may it
 be my desire and care, that I may give and receive as
 much

much instruction as possible; and, when I am alone, may I remember my heavenly father is with me; and O! may I enjoy the pleasure of thy presence, and feel the animating power of it awakening my soul to an earnest desire to think and act as in thy sight:—Thus let my days be spent, and let them all be closed in thy fear, and under a sense of thy gracious presence.—Meet me, O God, in my evening retirements, and, when I view my conduct, may I do it with an impartial eye.—Let not self-love spread a false-colouring over it; but may I judge myself as one that expects to be judged of the Lord, who searcheth all hearts, and cannot forget any of my works.—Let my prayer come daily up before thee as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be, as the morning and evening sacrifice.—May I resign my powers to sleep in calmness and serenity, humbly hoping in thy mercy, through Jesus Christ, whether my days on earth be prolonged, or the residue of them be cut off. If death comes in its natural course, may it find me employed in thy service; and if I am called on a sudden, O thou! of infinite mercy, suffer not the sun to go down in thy wrath; but may I find a sweet and easy passage from the troubles of this world to an immortal state. O Lord, these things I ask, through the merits of my Redeemer's Blood. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R VI.

O Thou supreme, yet all righteous and gracious governor of the universe! mean and contemptible as this little province of thy spacious empire may appear, thou dost not disregard the earth, and its inhabitants, but attendest to its concerns with the most condescending and gracious regards.—I believe in thy universal providence and care, and I firmly believe thy holy, wise, and kind interposition in every thing that relates

relates to me, and to the circumstances of my abode in this world.—O Lord, enable me to look through all inferior causes unto thee, whose eyes are upon all thy creatures—to thee who formest the light, and createst darkness, who makest peace, and createst evil. O may I look up to thee as the first cause and end of all things! I acknowledge that it is of thy infinite mercy and goodness that I am not consumed and consigned over to everlasting destruction! O thou fountain of forgiveness! I confess that the sins of one day of my life have justly merited all these chastisements. But O wonderful forbearance! that thou hast not given commission to do all the dreadful work of justice, but hast permitted me, poor, undeserving wretch that I am, time to see and experience thy goodness towards me in this world—and a full display of thy matchless love in the glorious plan of redemption, purchased by the only begotten son—O wonderful condescension, that thou shouldst lay aside the sceptre of universal sway, to undergo all the scorn and contempt of a self-righteous and tumultuous mob!—O let me pour out my whole soul into thy friendly bosom, acknowledging my numerous sins, and earnestly beseeching thy forgiveness: And O grant me a favourable look in the midst of my afflictions!—Support my soul by thy consolations, mingled with my tribulations, and shew me thy marvellous loving kindness.—I am partaker of thy bounty every day and moment of life—I am partaker of thy gospel. O make me partaker of the grace of it, operating in my heart, that I may come nearer and nearer on the temper of my mind to thee, and, when the days of my affliction will have an end in this world, may I be received into the mansions of everlasting bliss. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R VII.

(Which was his last.)

O DEAR SIR,

Nov. 11th.

THE time fast approaching, and the very great probability of the awful sentence being put in execution, induced me to collect a few thoughts for that trying moment; if they, in any degree, correspond with your ideas, I shall be glad, and am, &c.

O thou supreme ruler of the visible and invisible worlds! Thou sovereign of life and of death, of earth and of heaven, bow down thy gracious ear, O God, and let my prayer come before thee with acceptance! The hour will soon come, when thou wilt separate me from this world, with which I have been so long and familiarly acquainted, and lead me to another as yet unknown. Enable me, O most mighty sovereign, by the assistance of thy divine spirit, to make the change as becomes a man, and a christian, as one who is called of thee to receive an inheritance incorruptible, and fadeth not. I acknowledge, O Lord, the justice of that sentence, by which I am to suffer, and own thy wisdom and goodness in appointing it: help me to turn it into the happy occasion of honoring thee, and adorning the profession of a Christian, that I may glorify thee in the pangs of death, when this sinful part of my nature is dissolved. Gracious father, I would not quit this world without my grateful acknowledgments to thee, for all that abundant goodness which thou hast caused to pass before me: With my dying breath will I bear witness to thy faithful care. I thank thee, O my God, that this guilty, forfeited, unprofitable life was so long spared. I thank thee for the mercies of my days, which are now come to their period. I adore thy wonderful goodness, that thou hast taught me to throw myself entirely on the all-sufficiency of my Redeemer; for the riches of thy grace manifested in him; for his instructions and his example; for his blood and his righteousness.

ness. I bless thee, O God, that I am not dying in an ungenerate state, but that thou didst awaken and convince me; I thank thee for thy Ministers and ordinances; I thank thee for thy blessed word, and for those exceeding rich and precious promises of it, promises of support in death and of glory beyond it, and of the resurrection of my body to everlasting life. Cheer and support me, O most gracious God! in these last extremities of expiring nature. May thou add me to the happy number of those who have been more than Conquerors in Death; and, may thou give me such supplies of thy holy spirit, as will enable me to submit with cheerfulness and resignation to thy heavenly will.

O may I indeed presume to say I am accepted of thee: O may my sins, numerous as they are, enflamed by every aggravating circumstance, be had in remembrance no more. And, O God, now I am standing on the borders of both worlds; now I view things as in the light of thy presence, and of eternity; how unworthy do I appear, that I should be taken to dwell with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Alas! I have reason to look with deep humiliation in a poor, unprofitable, sinful life. But O most adorable Majesty, I come unto thee as a sinner who believes in thy son, for pardon and life. I fall down before thee as a guilty and polluted wretch; but thou hast made me rejoice, that I am in the hands of the good shepherd. O Lord enable me to look down upon this world, which I am going to quit, and breathe out my dying vows for its prosperity. I humbly beseech thee, that thou wilt guard it, and all who keep thy commandments, as the objects of thy peculiar care. Bless the whole race of mankind, unite them more and more in the bonds of peace and holiness: And now, O God, bear me to the general assembly, and church of the first born, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect; and whatever this flesh may suffer, let my steady soul be fixed on thee. Let faith perform its last office in

an honourable manner. Let my few remaining moments be spent for thy glory, and so let me ascend with love in my heart, and praise on my faltering tongue; saying, blessing, honour, glory and power be unto him, that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Texts of Scripture selected, and connected, by him,
and which he read in his way to the GALLOWS.

FEAR not for I am with thee; be not dismayed: for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. And he is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death. Therefore, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. Oh continue that loving kindness unto them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart; for with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light. Thou shalt shew me the path of life, in thy presence is fullness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness; for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day; therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my

my flesh also shall rest in hope; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, those also, that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. I give unto my sheep eternal life, said Jesus, the good shepherd, and they shall never perish, but have everlasting life; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one, that believeth on me, should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there may ye be also.

Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my father, and to your father, and to my God, and your God.—Father, I will that those, thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; that the love, wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them. He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly: Amen, even so come Lord Jesus! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

An EXACT COPY of the VERY PAPER, which he read, WORD FOR WORD, to the People, immediately before Execution.

My Friends,

YOU are come here to witness as awful a scene, as any that can possibly happen in the events of human life. You are come to see a fellow creature suffer a painful and ignominious DEATH.

You see a man just going to launch into ETERNITY, because public Justice demands his life, as a just forfeiture, for having violated the laws of his country. Alas, my friends! You view a man as susceptible of friendship, and who knew the relative duties of society as well as most of you; and yet, by a strange perversion of those amiable qualities, you see him reduced to this miserable condition.

To trace out all the various steps and progress of vice, when religion is thrown aside, and vanity, folly, and dissipation are substituted in its place, is not my design; and, as the language of truth should ever drop from the lips of a dying man; let what I now address to all have its due weight.

I look back with regret, and compunction of mind, on a life that has been spent, alas too little under the direction and influence of *that wisdom from above!* Yielding to the imagination of a deceiving heart, and to the false maxims and manners of a deceiving world, I lived, to my shame I speak it, without God, and without hope: the pleasures, folly, and dissipations of life were indulged without check or controul.—However it is some comfort to my mind, that I can charge myself with no other crime, that could have made me the deserved object of public justice. I have acted, in different relations of life, with honour and fidelity; but, Alas! amidst the discharge of these duties, I was often too unmindful of the duties I owed myself. I gave way to what was gay and fashionable, and spent my time in being conformed to the world, which I now feel, and acknowledge with the sincerity of a dying man, should have been spent in a very different manner. Would to God! that the young, thoughtless, and infidel world, saw as I now see, felt as I now feel—the false reasoning, and false maxims, of the fashionable world, would appear insipid, in comparison of those doctrines that comfort the heart, of those truths that warm the soul, of those hopes that strengthen the last moments of a dying man. I now feel, and bear honourable testimony to, the precious discoveries of the Gospel: I feel every part suited to my guilt, to my ignorance, to my weakness, to my fears.—I have experienced the instructions of divine mercy to be, indeed, *peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

I, as a dying man, rest my *all*, in time and eternity, on the Saviour it points out, on the promises it gives, on the blessings it bestows, on the hopes it discloses.—Would to God! those giddy and gay companions, who have been the associates of my past days, now felt the convictions that have passed through my mind, and the comforts that have gradually sprung up in my soul, from believing in the mercy and love of God to the chief of sinners. With what pleasure would they leave the world and its vanities! With what hatred would they detest sin! With what desire would they walk in the ways of religion!

My present unhappy situation convinces me, that there is an all-discerning Providence, that detects, by the most unexpected and trifling circumstances, the crimes of men; and that nothing can elude the knowledge of the Almighty. My present situation convinces me, that his laws are not habitually and perseveringly to be trifled with, that he will sooner or later *write bitter things* against the sinner. Dismal would my state be, did not the same God, that detects folly, tell me also in his word, that he alone can and does pardon them through the Redeemer.—Here all my hopes and happiness are placed, when every thing under the sun appears as nothing and vanity. I beseech Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Young and Old, to *seek first the kingdom of Heaven and its Righteousness*, and to trust to Providence for temporal blessings. Had I regarded my duties to God, and made the cares and pursuits of life my secondary object, I should not have gone untimely to the grave. The inordinate love of the world, pride of heart, self confidence, and an unconcern about divine and eternal things, are among the chief causes that have involved me in my present calamity. Every one, that wishes well to his present, but especially his eternal comfort, as a dying man I beseech by the mercies of God, and the love of the Redeemer, to guard and watch against those bitter roots of iniquity. I have felt the misery that is at the end of them, and, in order that you may now feel it, take a contrary course to what I have done. Study,

in the first place, to pay a devout obedience to the laws and ordinances of God : a regard to the laws of man will follow. I acknowledge the justice of my sentence—I have felt the bitterness of iniquity—Eternal thanks to my Saviour's blood ! I now experience the comforts of his pardon.

The sense of guilt and dread of exemplary punishment had, indeed, once tempted me to use such opportunities, as were then in my power, effectually to have evaded the sentence of the law ; but I now most thankfully praise that all directing power who restrained such unwarrantable attempt, and am happy in those instructions, and that hopeful and christian state of mind, which have now influenced me, chearfully to submit my last sacrifice, to the justice of the divine and human laws.

It may be proper, before I conclude, to contradict some ill grounded assertions, which some gentlemen, of whose humanity and goodness I cannot say too much, communicated to me lately. In answer to this charge, the true case is so different from what is said and believed by some, that the very men who originally raised the report, for I cannot mistake either the persons, or the place from whence it came, I mean no person in Newcastle, that if it be possible for heedless folly to profit any one, and in this particular case it really has, the persons I allude to have been great gainers, and a letter, which I have now by me, written before I was informed of the report, and shewn to my friends here, conveysthe claim I make, and which as a dying man I solemnly declare before Almighty God to be just. Those who gave birth to the report, and believed it, will know to what I allude, and what I mean.

Whatever may have been the motives for any Gentleman in Newcastle to credit such report, I by no means blame, but as truly forgive them, as I hope for mercy from that Being, who knows the hearts of all men : but I now with my dying breath contradict it. The Gentlemen of the Bank, who are the sufferers, deserve every commendation I can bestow upon them, for the proper and humane manner with which they

conducted the business; and, next to my own future happiness, it has been my strongest desire, that I might have it in my power to make restitution of what I have wronged them; but, Alas! that is not in my power. Some other insinuations have been mentioned to my prejudice, but they are of that kind as must naturally be expected in such cases, therefore I think them unworthy of notice.

I must now beg leave to say something respecting my situation in confinement; and, while I attempt to do justice to the Gentlemen concerned, I indulge the genuine feelings of my own heart.—The behaviour of the present Sheriff to me is far beyond any thing I can say of him: If humanity, generosity, and politeness, shewn in the most affecting and sympathising manner, claim my regard, I have experienced them all in a very eminent degree.—The other Magistrates of Newcastle justly deserve my warmest thanks for their pity towards me.—I am particularly obliged to the Rev. Mr Brown, who has shewn me every civility, both in his official, and civil capacity.—I am also obliged to the Rev. Mr Grant who has been of great service to me in many respects.—I think myself particularly fortunate, that, since it was my unhappy fate to be in this situation, I was a prisoner under Mr Harle's care: His and Mrs Harle's humanity and kind attention to me, when they knew I was destitute of every thing, was such, as would do honor to the greatest and most feeling mind.—I beg that all persons, who have interested themselves in my favour, will accept of every thing I am possessed of, that is, GRATITUDE.

W. ALEXANDER.

These are the last words of W. Alexander—Witness my Hand, John Brown, Officiating Ordinary.

R E-

REFLECTIONS.

"Speak evil of no man."

CAlumny, or evil-speaking, has been a reigning vice in all ages, and by this means a greater guilt is contracted than men generally apprehend, or are aware of.—If we know for certainty, what we report of another to be false, it is downright lying: if we believe what we report of others to be false, it is slander; if what evil we report of others be really true, and we know it to be so, yet it is defamation, and contrary to that goodness and charity which christianity requires, for to divulge the faults of others, though really guilty of them, without any necessity, is certainly a sin. To think and speak evil of others is not only a bad thing, but a sign of a bad man; and in many cases it is as great charity to conceal an evil we hear of our neighbour, as to relieve him in distress.—Righteousness and justice is doing all that good to others which they have any claim of right to demand; but goodness is doing them all that good which is any ways right, fit, and reasonable for us to bestow.

REFLECTIONS on SOLITUDE.

THE world is a troubled ocean, and who can erect stable purposes on its fluctuating waves.—The world is a school of wrong, and who does not feel himself warped by its pernicious influences. Some sacred truth, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated.—Our innocence is of so tender a constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous croud—Our purity is so delicate, that it scarce touches on the world without contracting a stain—But in the serene and contemplative walks of life, we may commune with ourselves, and learn that best of sciences to “know ourselves”—Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers,

powers, and grace recover her native energy.—To a mind, content upon its own improvement, Solitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the entertainments presented in the multitude. But am I then alone? No—Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth, unseen, both when we are awake and when we sleep—Perhaps there may be some of them, even in this lonely prison, or hovering about it, joining with me in contemplating the Creator's works—Let me indulge the pleasing thought; and O! may it inspire me with suitable ideas of his Almighty power and goodness. Perhaps those ministring spirits, who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow me in this lonely habitation; and even in my most solitary moments be my constant attendants—What a pleasing awe is awakened by such reflection! O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute thought, where such refined and exalted beings preside. Whither shall I go from thy presence, or whither shall I go from thy spirit; if I climb up to the heights of heaven, thou art there enthroned in light; if I go down into the depths of the grave, thou art there also, in the pavilion of darkness—If I retire to the remotest eastern clime, where the morning first takes wing; if swifter than the parting ray, I pass to the opposite regions of the west, even there also shall I find thee.

REFLECTION on DEATH.

It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that judgment."

IF death be considered in itself, it is no more than what all the living creation here below undergo in common with ourselves. And what is dying? it is ceasing to live after the manner we now do; it is a removal, or rather an escape from a world of misfortunes and miseries, of sorrow and disquiet, of malice and

and deceit, noise and contention, of pains and anguish of crosses and disappointments, of vanity and vexation and, what is worst of all, of temptation and sin. It is doing that, once for all, which we have done a thousand times already, by the decays and infirmities of nature. In short, the present life, even to the prosperous, will be found, on a just computation, to have made a very unequal distribution; for even such have a larger proportion of trouble than of happiness. But to the generality of mankind, it is a rough tempestuous sea, and death is the making their port, or at least retiring to the shelter of a creek, where storms can reach and annoy them no more. These are truths on which we are sadly convinced at our own expence. The only deceit arises from our natural fondness for living, which God hath wisely infused and woven into our souls, that we might sustain our calamities the better. As on the other hand, he hath made faith of a future state our virtue, and ordained the miseries of the present life, as an exercise of that virtue, that both together might be a balance against the objects of sense, draw off our attention from a place that was never intended for our rest, and raise our desires up to those better things provided for us in another world. These reflections duly considered would not only render the thoughts of it, but even the thing itself, very tolerable to us. But if we consider death in another capacity as leading and keeping us close prisoners to a just and tremendous judgment, then it hath a sting indeed, which is the sense of guilt and sin unpardoned; this is what nothing can relieve but the comforts arising from true repentance, from a saviour sacrificed to expiate and make *full satisfaction* for our offences, from a title to our part in that expiation and favor of a reconciled God. This is our sure confidence, and heaven and earth may pass away, but his merits and promises can never fail.

PARAPHRASE of the XXVth PSALM.

MY days in sin and sorrow spent,
 Lord unto thee I cry;
 Help me, O God, or else I'm lost
 To all eternity.

Let those who tread thy heav'nly courts,
 Where thou mak'st known thy ways,
 Unmindful of the sinners threats,
 With boldness sing thy praise.

How far, Lord, do thy ways surpass
 The feeble thoughts of man;
 For when their works thy law transgress,
 Thy mercy who can scan!

David, who by thy just commands
 Was rais'd on Israel's throne,
 Even there, the Royal sinner bends
 The knee to thee supreme.

Thy faithful promise he surveys,
 With extasy divine;
 Inspir'd by thee, he lifts his eyes
 To thy pacific throne.

The sins of youth he thee implores,
 In mercy, to forgive;
 And prays thy ways thou wilt disclose,
 That he in truth may live.

Submission, in that great pursuit,
 Points out the way divine;
 And shews the man, of purest heart,
 How far he is from thine.

Good and upright are all thy ways
 To sinful man defin'd;
 Send down, O Lord, thy heav'nly rays,
 On my benighted mind.

In mercy thou do'st lend thine ear,
 To such as call on thee;
 The meek thou guid'st with friendly care,
 O! shew that path to me.

O The cov'nant which thou mad'st of old
 To Abram's chosen race,
 Renew it now to me, O God,
 That I may rule in peace.

- 11 To thee, O Lord, I lift my eyes,
Where mercy may be found;
Enrich my mind with heav'nly grace,
That blessings may abound.
- 12 With fault'ring tongue and humble voice,
Thy truth shall be my theme;
I'll raise my soul and sing thy praise
With hopes and joys unknown.
- 13 Contented, free from ev'ry care,
My mind at ease shall dwell;
Thy servants feed thou shalt secure,
On David's throne to rule.
- 14 Thy secrets, Lord, who can explore,
Thy righteous decrees;
Alas! they far surpass the pow'r
Of mortals brightest rays.
- 15 Conscience, that monitor divine,
Shews me the deadly sting;
Affliction guides the way to heav'n,
Where truth and goodness reign.
- 16 Forgetful of thy sov'reign power,
That rais'd me to the throne;
I stray'd from truth and justice pure,
And happiness supreme.
- 17 Compassion, large as thy own mind,
Free from every stain;
Love, cloth'd with pity's cheering hand,
Will break this deadly chain.
- 18 Look down with pity, O my God,
And pardon what is past;
My sins are great, but thou art good
In mercy, to the last.
- 19 O mighty God, whose power supreme
Is universal sway,
Rebuke my foes, their rage disarm,
And teach them to obey.
- 20 Father of spirits, light and life,
Receive this better part;
Keep it from folly, free from strife,
Let wisdom be its lot.

- 21 Uprightness is thy great delight,
 Integrity thy rule;
 Thy holy law supremely just,
 To regulate my will.
- 22 Pure from the fountain of thy grace,
 With blessings crown thy church;
 May distant nations now rejoice,
 In Christ their Saviour rich.

*A LETTER wrote by W. ALEXANDER, to the Hon.
 Mr V. who was the means of obtaining a Respite.*

SIR,

October 26th.

Notwithstanding the care you took to conceal an action which does honour to human nature—yet, Sir, like the animating rays of the sun, it even found its way into this lonely prison; not, Sir, to dazzle the eyes, or fill the mind with visionary hopes, but to feed it with reflections the most suitable, in my opinion, (next to the Author of all Good) that I could possibly think on.

I have often wished for an opportunity of returning you my most sincere thanks, for an act of the most disinterested friendship I have ever heard of, but, till lately, I was ignorant of your address.

Believe me, Sir, I feel the obligation as I ought.—The time, which your humane interposition procured me, has been of vast advantage; and as I expect no farther indulgence, I cannot be disappointed.

That you, Sir, may live long and happy in the enjoyment of every thing this world can produce, and supremely so in the next, is the sincere prayer of

SIR,

Your much obliged and very humble servant, &c.

C

CHRIS-

CHRISTOPHER SOULSBY, Esq.

(The Sheriff.)

SIR,

HOWever painful it must have been for you to deliver, and me to hear, the awful news, yet, Sir, the manner it was done had something in it so very agreeable, and bespoke so much the Gentleman, and the man of feeling, that it was almost impossible for the most susceptible mind, overwhelmed as mine is, not to suspend his own, for the more agreeable reflections of humanity, politeness, and generosity.—Such marks of unmerited regard justly claim my warmest thanks to you, Sir, and the Gentlemen who attended you.

You cannot, Sir, suppose, I am ignorant how much you have declared your readiness to render the melancholy scene as easy to me as possible. It is from a thorough conviction of your great humanity, that I presume to request a favor, not so much on my own account, as my distressed relations: The letter conveying the awful news can only reach Glasgow this day; and, as they live a considerable distance from thence, it will be impossible for them to be here before Sunday night. I am informed, that you expressed a strong desire, in case you could, consistent with the duty of your office, and I requested it, you would willingly extend the time: If you can, Sir, for the reasons I have given, I should take it as a very particular favor. You are, Sir, probably informed, that I have been attended by a Clergyman of my own persuasion. I should be happy if you will permit him to attend me at the last. I am, with the most profound esteem,

SIR,

*Your much obliged,**And most obedient humble servant, &c.**Newgate, Thursday Morning, Nov. 13th, 1783.*

REV

REV. MR BROWN.

(One of the Ordinaries.)

REV. SIR,

Gratitudo obliges me thus to make you my warmest acknowledgments, for the long and great advantages I have received from your Bible: To a person in my awful situation, nothing could possibly be so suitable. The notes have afforded me great assistance, by giving me a proper sense of many passages, otherwise obscure: and they have likewise enabled me to spend many a solitary hour very comfortably; without which I must have been very miserable.

You will also permit me to return you my most sincere thanks, for your humane and agreeable attendance on me. I have, Sir, often seen with pleasure, how anxiously you wished to serve me, both as to my concerns in this world, and by giving me every assistance to prepare me for eternity.—May He, in whose service you are, give you every blessing in this world; and may you receive the reward of the good at last, such is the sincere prayer of,

REV. SIR,

*Newgate,**Your much obliged,**8th, Nov. 1783.**And very humble servant, &c.*

MR HARLE.

(The Gaoler.)

SIR,

BY attempting to do you justice, I indulge the genuine sentiments of my own heart, for, however mean I may be in other respects, yet, Sir, in gratitude I consider myself equal to the greatest: And I cannot possibly take my leave of you and Mrs Harle, without making this acknowledgment: That since it was the will of providence to bring me into this unhappy situation, I consider it as a very happy circumstance, that I was prisoner under your care.

Your humanity and attention to me, when you knew I was destitute of the means of procuring the necessities of life, was such, as would do honour to the greatest character.

7 APR 66

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

F I N I S.

the ge
owever
titude
canno
withou
was the
y situa
that

u knew
necessa
to the